

An editorial recently published in my upstate New York congressional district directs readers to organizations involved in relief efforts. While the thrust of the editorial is an analysis of the efficacy of anti-war demonstrations, let me be clear that it is not my wish to suppress anyone's right to express him or herself. Instead, I want to share this editorial with my colleagues because I embrace the overall conclusion—that demonstrating support for our troops and contributing to relief efforts is something that each and every one of us can and should do, regardless of our feelings about the military operation.

[From the Eagle Newspapers, March 26, 2003]

TIME FOR PROTEST HAS LONG PASSED

Even as our forces fight in Iraq, protesters in Upstate New York and elsewhere continue the futile banner waving that started months ago, when Saddam Hussein made it clear he would ignore United Nations mandates and President Bush quickened the march toward war.

We make no suggestion that protestors shouldn't have a right to speak their minds, but protestors should realize that no sign, no chant, no assembled multitude will cease military action in Iraq. If the goal is to ensure the well-being of the Iraqi people, it's time to turn futile displays into real action. Several reputable organizations have been set up to aid in Iraqi relief efforts following the military strikes. The U.N. runs a Humanitarian Information Center for Iraq, which will help coordinate humanitarian efforts in that nation. Church World Service and World Vision are two Christian-based humanitarian organizations dedicating time and money to relief efforts.

Support for our fighting forces is most important now. Our troops are following orders. Whether we approve or decry the actions of the Bush Administration, whether we believe one motivation over another, whether we think other countries' approval is important, we must honor the commitment of our troops. It's time to lay down the signs, the banners and the unproductive rhetoric and take action that can make a difference. For more information on relief organizations, visit www.agoodplacetostart.org, www.churchworldservice.org or www.worldvision.org.

The Department of Defense website is another resource offering suggestions about how we can support our troops. It says:

Thousands of Americans are asking what they can do to show their support for servicemembers, especially those serving overseas in this time of war. Below are Web sites for several organizations that are sponsoring programs for members of the Armed Forces overseas. While it would be inappropriate for the Department to endorse any specifically, servicemembers do value and appreciate such expressions of support:

"Gifts from the Homefront" Certificates now allow you to send a gift certificate to a loved one, family member or dear friend associated with the military. These certificates are redeemable by Authorized Patrons of the PX/BX and are redeemable at all locations around the world including deployed areas. If you're looking for the perfect gift to give that special individual anytime and anywhere, then "Gifts from the Homefront" Certificates are the perfect choice, go to (<http://www.aafes.com/docs/homefront.htm>).

Donate to "Operation USO Care Package" at (<http://www.usocares.org/home.htm>).

The Gift of Groceries program at (<http://www.commissaries.com/certificheck/>

index.htm) helps meet the family needs of our Guard and Reserve troops fighting the war on terrorism.

Donate a calling card to help keep servicemembers in touch with their families at Operation Uplink at (<http://www.operationuplink.org>).

Send a greeting via e-mail through Operation Dear Abby at (<http://anyservicemember.navy.mil>) or (www.OperationDearAbby.net).

Sign a virtual thank you card at the Defend America Web site at (<http://www.defendamerica.mil/nmarn.html>).

The "Stars and Stripes" newspaper includes a daily "Messages of Support" section giving family and friends of deployed service members a chance to pass along greetings, announcements, and words of encouragement. Such messages (LIMITED TO 50 WORDS OR LESS) will be printed on a first-come, first-run basis. Messages may be sent to: (messages@stripes.com).

Make a donation to one of the military relief societies:

Army Emergency Relief at (<http://www.aerhq.org>) Navy/Marine Relief Society at (<http://www.nmc.org>) Air Force Aid Society at (<http://www.afas.org>) Coast Guard Mutual Assistance at (<http://www.cgmahq.org>).

Support the American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services at (<http://www.redcross.org/services/afes>).

Purchase a Patriot Bond at (<http://www.ustreas.gov>).

Volunteer at a VA Hospital to honor veterans who bore the lamp of freedom in past conflicts.

Reach out to military families in your community, especially those with a loved one overseas.

Please do not flood the military mail system with letters, cards, and gifts. Due to security concerns and transportation constraints, the Department cannot accept items to be mailed to "Any Servicemember." Some people have tried to avoid this prohibition by sending large numbers of packages to an individual servicemember's address, which however well intentioned, clogs the mail and causes unnecessary delays.

The support and generosity of the American people has touched the lives of many servicemembers, over 300,000 of whom are deployed overseas.

Mr. Speaker, I trust my colleagues and my fellow Americans will find this information helpful. Showing our support for the men and women in uniform is the least we can do. After all, they are, at this very moment, putting their lives on the line to defend our freedom.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM DeMINT

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2003

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, I was absent during roll calls 92, 93, and 94. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on each of those rollcalls.

COMMENDING THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2003

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the University of Kansas, my undergraduate alma mater, for reaching the Final Four competition for the second year in a row. KU has shown impressive skill in this year's NCAA conference, and I am confident that they will reach the championship game.

The Jayhawks have benefited from excellent senior leadership and the outstanding coaching of Roy Williams. The team has a 29–7 record, most recently with great victories over Duke and Arizona.

Congratulations to the KU Men's 2002–2003 Basketball team on their efforts and their return to the Final Four. This team has shown an ability to thrive in the face of adversity. I know their play in Saturday's match-up against Marquette will make me proud to be a Jayhawk. Rock Chalk Jayhawk, KU!

CONGRATULATIONS BOARD MEMBERS OF THE VILLAGE OF WESTERN SPRINGS AS YOU RETIRE FROM PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2003

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my warmest wishes to several Board Members upon their retirement from service to the Village of Western Springs, Illinois. The following members will be recognized on Saturday, April 5, 2003 for their commitment to public service.

Village Board Members: Howard Blackman, Harry Kannry, and Jane McMurray

Park Board Members: Ken Sitkowski and Greg Jonas

Library Board Members: Leslie Karas and Mark Schilling.

All of you have proven to be a true asset to your family, friends and community. Your dedication to the community in which you live has truly been instrumental to the success of the Village of Western Springs.

As you retire, I wish to extend my heartiest congratulations to Village of Western Springs Board Members and your families as you celebrate your accomplishments in public service. May your futures be filled with much success.

AGAINST FY 2004 VETERANS BUDGET CUTS IN HEALTH CARE

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2003

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my opposition against the